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RUSSWARD
~~Saintpaulia~~ Growers
JONESBORO, ARK.

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News Letter

February, 1951

Gentle Reader:

With the arrival of February, most Southerners feel that Spring is practically here, even though the inhabitants of Minnesota are just now getting the furnace to working good for the winter.

Spring is the big crown rot time, though, whether North or South, and questions in regard to this pestiferous malady have already begun to pour in.

Q. My violet always had such large tall thick stalks with such huge healthy blooms but now it is blooming again but the stalks are short, very thin, and fragile, and blooms are half the usual size and don't last but a couple of days, then wither—The leaves on the plant seem to be lifeless—just lay on the rim of the pot. What to do? Mrs. W.E.R., Arkansas.

A. This is a perfect description of the slow, insidious type of crown or root rot. As the decay gradually works into the stalk, cutting off the passage of moisture from the roots into the leaves, the foliage and blossoms (if any) become limp. If one can summon the courage to go ahead and operate on a stricken plant when this limpness is first noticed, the plant can nearly always be saved. The temptation, however, is to "ignore it and it will go away"—except that crown-rot never does. The decay, on the contrary, continues to creep relentlessly into the crown until it reaches the base of the leaves. It is at this juncture that the plant appears to moult, as it were, dropping its foliage at an alarming rate. Unfortunately, inexperienced violet collectors don't suspect that anything is wrong until the disease enters this final phase. By this time only a shell of healthy tissue is left, and the plant is so debilitated that it seldom has the strength to form new roots of its own, even though the brown matter is carefully scraped out.

Therefore, chillun, mind the crispness of your plant. Old hands at the violet game habitually finger foliage (just a light flip of the thumb will tell you all you want to know) and save themselves a heap of trouble thereby. Of course, if you develop this habit, you must expect to undergo a certain amount of torture when you attend violet shows where "DO NOT TOUCH THE PLANTS" signs are prominently displayed. But then you can't have everything.



To treat crown rot, slice off the plant at the soil level, scrape out all trace of the rot, and re-root in a saucer or cup of sterile sand or vermiculite.

Q. I water my plants every five to seven days. Have been wondering if it would prevent the possibility of crown rot if they were watered oftener but with less water. Mrs. E.C., Iowa.

A. Best idea is to water your plant by the way the soil feels rather than by the calendar. Water enough to keep the soil just barely moist at all times. Watering is not the only cause of crown rot, either. Burning of roots by excessive use of fertilizers is a frequent cause. Dipping or spraying plants on damp days when they cannot dry out properly is often fatal.

Q. What causes young plants to develop loose crowns and get wobbly? Mrs. E.N.H., Pennsylvania.

A. Lots of things. A wobbly plant, like a wobbly lady, is not necessarily sick. You just have to engineer a little bit to get it to hold still in the right places. In the case of violets, if you pack the soil pretty tight up right under the leaves, and then water carefully from the top for a month or so, you will encourage root growth at the top of the pot rather than all at the base.

Q. On my Ruffles I had one double flower, which has formed a seed pot. If this seed ripens, would it be of any value to sow it? Mrs. K.S., Michigan.

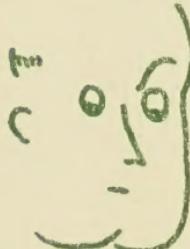
A. Heck yeah. The results should be interesting!

Q. I want a double white violet. Will you put my name on your waiting list to be sent one as soon as you get one?

A. Must respectfully decline. We are not set up to book orders months ahead (much less years!) and such arrangements usually wind up with strained relations on all sides.

Q. How must I take care of a variegated violet? Do they need more fertilizing than others? Mrs. F.J.P., Illinois.

A. Well, for one thing, you baby it. They're kind of a pain in the neck. The more variegation there is on them, the more sickly they are. They waste away and die of you DON'T fertilize 'em, and their roots are so tender that you often kill 'em if you DO fertilize, so choose your poison. If by any chance you take such good care of them that they flourish, like as not the things will start to grow all green, with no variegation at all. In other words, lady, enjoy it while you can.



So long for now,

"*Russ*"

R U S S W A R D Saintpaulia Growers



Sustaining Member African Violet Society of America, Inc.

Ship To _____ Date _____

Street or R.F.D. _____

Town and State _____

Amount Enclosed \$

If this order is being sent as a gift, please write your own name and address below, since we would like to notify you of shipment.

Gift wrapping on request.

Does Your Order Total \$10.00 or More? If So, Please
Select A \$1.25 Variety As A Gift From Us.

ARKANSAS CUSTOMERS: ADD 2% SALES TAX

PRICE LIST

Shipping Information—Plants shipped in 2-inch pots in which they are grown. List price includes packing and mailing costs. All plant orders sent Special Handling. We guarantee safe arrival of plants. Since we assume the responsibility for safe arrival, we reserve the right to ship at our own discretion during the winter months. To avoid disappointment, and to take advantage of frequent price reductions, order from the most recent Price List.

Important Notice—So far as we can ascertain, the manufacturer has discontinued production of the insecticide NNOR. We are completely sold out and regret that we will be unable to get more.

Blue Eyed Beauty—Large white blossom with blue marking on the flower. Husky medium-green foliage. Is remarkable for its vitality and profuse bloom. Three-inch plants _____ \$3.00

Blue Pet—An awfully sweet little miniature. Girl foliage, round, flat leaves with white spot at base. Dark blue flower _____ \$1.25

Blush Maid—Exquisite shell pink. Foliage like Pink Beauty, bloom much paler _____ \$1.25

Brown's Blue Dot—Unusually heavy, quilted foliage, almost Supreme-type. Small white marking at base of leaf. Blue flower has rounded petals _____ \$1.50

Double Duchess—New strain not quite as double as the old Duchess. Opens well _____ \$1.50

Double Neptune—Loveliest of the doubles to date. Shows all Neptune characteristics with double flower of excellent color _____ \$2.00

Diplotricha—Species. Commonly called Kewensis. Pale green delicate foliage, very small dainty blue flowers _____ \$1.25

Lancaster Red—Formerly known as Red Spoon. We had this for awhile last year and it was extremely popular. Glossy dark green leaves tend to cup up. Flower has slender petals, very dainty. Unusually fine color _____ \$1.75

Lavender Pink Princess—New. Simply magnificent lavender blooms the size of quarters. Extra fine foliage, darkish. A lovely plant _____ \$3.00

McFarland Blue Warrior—Large ovate leaves, darkish blue flower. A superior plant in every way _____ \$2.00

Moire—Variegation of rich purple blossom resembles moire taffeta. Medium green foliage. Unusually fine \$1.75

Old Lace—Deeply scalloped leaves. Definitely a miniature. Dark blue flowers carried high and profusely \$1.75

Periwinkle—Lovely paler blue. Outer surface of petals much lighter than inner, giving effect of a tiny white border around the flower \$1.75

Pink Girl—Scalloped, medium green foliage with the white marking at the base of the leaf. Pink flower \$1.50

Red Girl—Rich red blossom with the traditional girl foliage \$1.25

Red King—Finest red to date. Heavy dark green foliage, intense burgundy flowers, unusually large \$1.75

Rosie O'Grady—Without a doubt the finest and loveliest of the pinks. Large, medium green leaves, excellent habit. Large pink flower with overlaid rose star \$2.00

Ruffles—Very unusual. Dark green bronzy-looking leaves. Tapered, dog-tooth foliage with red reverse show some ruffling with age of plant. Bloom pale blue \$1.50

Sailor Girl—Finer-type of girl foliage. Pale blue flower \$1.50

Snow Prince—You'll be hearing a lot about this one. Brand new. Pure white flowers. Foliage a great deal like Purple Prince—fine, slick. A simply breath-taking variety \$3.00

Thirty-Two—An outstanding plant. Fine slick shiny foliage with tendency to spoon. Large blue-lavender flower \$1.25

Violet Beauty—You'll say "There can't POSSIBLY be another lavender violet completely different from the others already introduced," just like I did. This one isn't exactly different, it's "more so." Flowers are bigger, foliage better, blooms better. Real class \$2.25

White Girl Hybrid—Fine husky plants of this, all in bud and bloom. Truly unusual. Predominantly white flower with blue or lavender markings \$2.00

White Lassie—This is a new white from the Brown Company, in Georgia. Pale green foliage, remarkably profuse bloom, nice growth habit \$2.25

